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HARDY
THE OXEN

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THE ¶ OXEN.

By THOMAS HARDY.

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CHRISTMAS Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few believe
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve
"Come; see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

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